



CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

In today's interconnected world, English has emerged as a global lingua franca, making language proficiency an invaluable asset for students worldwide. Mastery of English involves four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Sabrina et al., 2020: 74). Among these, speaking is particularly crucial as it enables direct and immediate interaction. As noted by Morozova (2013) in Sumardi, et al (2022: 361), speaking ability is a vital communication tool that can be developed and enhanced. In non native English speaking countries like Indonesia, the ability to speak English confidently is increasingly recognized as essential for academic achievement and career opportunities. However, many students face considerable challenges in achieving fluency and confidence when speaking English. These difficulties often arise from various factors that hinder students from speaking in front of the class, such as a lack of confidence and a tendency to feel anxious during speaking performances due to a fear of making mistakes (Saniasa, 2018: 3).

For high school students developing the ability to communicate effectively in English is critical as they prepare for academic and career opportunities. Nonetheless, a substantial number of students experience difficulties in articulating their thoughts in English confidently. This struggle not only impacts their language proficiency but can also hinder their overall academic performance

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and limit their opportunities in both higher education and professional environments.

During the researcher's teaching practice at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu, it was observed that several students faced significant difficulties in speaking English fluently, primarily due to a lack of confidence and a fear of making mistakes. These challenges were linked to a lack of confidence, influenced by factors such as classroom dynamics, peer pressure, and the fear of negative evaluation from their peers (Rumiyati & Seftika, 2018: 56). These issues created significant obstacles to active participation in speaking activities, as students often hesitated to express themselves or engage fully due to concerns about making mistakes or receiving criticism.

In this context, peer support emerges as a potential catalyst for overcoming these barriers to confidence. Peer support refers to an organized method of offering and receiving assistance, grounded in the inherent human tendency to show empathy and provide help, drawing from the knowledge gained through their shared experiences (Penny, 2018: 1). When students engage in peer interactions, they often experience a more comfortable and less judgmental atmosphere that can significantly alleviate their anxiety regarding language use. This support can encourage them to take risks in their speaking practice, participate more actively in classroom discussions, and ultimately enhance their language skills.



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This study aimed to determine the correlation between peer support and students' confidence in speaking English. By investigating how peer dynamics influence language learning, particularly in terms of developing speaking skills, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the role of social interactions in educational settings. Understanding this relationship could inform strategies for educators to cultivate supportive peer environments, thereby promoting greater confidence and fluency among students as they navigate their English language learning journey.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher found the following problems to be investigated in this research, they are:

1. The students at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu experience low confidence in speaking English, limiting their engagement in speaking activities.
2. Fear of making mistakes and peer pressure contribute to anxiety, making the students hesitant to express their ideas in English.
3. There is a need to examine the correlation between peer support and students' confidence in speaking English, to understand how peer interactions may influence these factors.

C. Limitation of the Problem

This research is focus on exploring the correlation between peer support and english speaking confidence among students at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu.



D. Research Question

Based on the limitation of the problem, this research is formulated with the following question: Is there any significant correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu?

E. Objective of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the researcher determined the purposes of this research as follows: To determine the correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu.

F. Significances of the Research

1. For Teachers

This research provides teachers with practical insights into how peer support can boost students' speaking confidence in English. Teachers can apply these findings by designing activities that promote peer collaboration, such as **pair work speaking tasks, peer feedback sessions, and small group discussions**. These classroom strategies help reduce students' speaking anxiety, build confidence, and improve fluency. Teachers are also encouraged to create a safe and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes and learning from each other.



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2. For Students

This research highlights the benefits of peer support in enhancing students' speaking confidence. Students can apply this by **actively participating in peer practice sessions, giving and receiving constructive feedback**, and working together in English based activities. When students feel supported by their classmates, they are more likely to speak up and practice using English, which is essential for developing fluency and reducing fear of judgment during speaking tasks.

3. For Readers

The findings offer readers an understanding of the challenges faced by students in speaking English confidently and the potential of peer support to address these challenges. These insights can inform the development of school programs, such as **peer assisted learning or buddy systems**, that aim to foster positive learning environments and improve students' engagement in language learning.

4. For Other Researchers

This research provides a foundation for future studies on the role of peer support in language learning, specifically in building confidence and fluency in speaking English. By examining the connection between peer support and speaking skills, this study opens avenues for further research in language education and social psychology, allowing other researchers to explore similar dynamics across different age groups, cultural settings, or language learning environments.



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G. Definition of the Key Terms

1. Peer Support

Peer support refers to an organized method of offering and receiving assistance, grounded in the inherent human tendency to show empathy and provide help, drawing from the knowledge gained through their shared experiences (Penny, 2018: 1). In an educational setting, it involves students assisting one another by providing guidance, emotional encouragement, and practical suggestions, usually in a cooperative and supportive environment.

2. Speaking

Speaking is a crucial skill that helps individuals not only convey ideas but also achieve personal goals and build social connections. As stated by Doyon (2000) in Nety, et al (2020: 9), speaking is the act of communicating ideas and opinions, expressing a desire or intention, solving problems through interaction, and establishing or maintaining social relationships.

3. Self Confidence

Self confidence is a mindset or sense of trust in one's own abilities, which helps a person to act without excessive anxiety, feel comfortable pursuing activities they enjoy, and take responsibility for their actions. It also involves being friendly and respectful when interacting with others, having a strong motivation to succeed, and being aware of both personal strengths and weaknesses (Nety et al., 2020: 9).